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ABSTRACT

An analysis of staff development practices in Texas during the year 1975-76 is provided, and four principles of effective inservice education (planning, situational design, content, and support) are outlined. The summary of findings is based on data from three unpublished dissertations, which had compiled data gathered via questionnaire from teachers, principals, and supervisors in 68 Texas school districts. Information centered around the following areas: (1) participation of personnel; (2) situational design of the inservice program; (3) evaluation and evaluation techniques; (4) content of programs; (5) source and amount of funding for inservice; and (6) incentives for teachers to participate. Analysis of the data and discrepancies in the findings are provided, as well as possibilities for future paths. References are included. (DS)

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a review of inservice education in texas

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a review of inservice education in texas

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TO EDUCATORS:

This document, *A Review of Inservice Education in Texas*, is an analysis of staff development practices in the state during the year of 1975-76. It is provided to school districts, colleges/universities, education service centers, and related educational agencies in the expectation that the research reported herein will be of benefit to those people who plan inservice education or assist others in the planning task.

We hope, further, that the information in this document will serve as a catalyst to the development of a comprehensive approach to planning for inservice education.

M. L. Brockette

M.L. Brockette
Commissioner of Education

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FOREWORD

This report has been produced as part of an inservice education planning project which was directed by the Department of Professional Development and Instructional Services in response to the Staff Development Priority adopted by the Texas State Board of Education in September 1976. This report is one part of the Project which consists of a series of studies conducted during the 1976-77 school year. Five studies grew out of the need to obtain information about inservice education in Texas. Ben M. Harris, Professor of Educational Administration, The University of Texas at Austin, provided consultant services and directed the studies, three of which form the major portion of this report. These three studies were conducted by Jimmie L. Creekmur, whose dissertation provided descriptive information about staff development in selected school districts; Don P. Killough, whose research into the inservice education practices of regional education service centers contributes heavily; and Dan P. McLendon, who researched the degree of consensus of various educator groups in Texas regarding the principles underlying effective inservice education. A review of studies by Gordon Lawrence, completed in 1974, and a survey of reports from selected state departments of education by James T. Carthel are also drawn upon, but to a limited extent, for purposes of this report.

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INTRODUCTION

Comprehensive review of the literature on staff development produces few elements which fully characterize effective inservice education. Several research studies, however, provide a rich background of information from which effectiveness of inservice education can be implied. Among these are *Patterns of Effective Inservice Education*, by Gordon Lawrence, which identifies fourteen factors supporting effective inservice education practice; *A Study of Inservice Education* by Bruce Joyce, which summarizes the state of the art; and *An Analysis of Documents Reporting on Selected Inservice Programs* by James Carthel, which is a study of the inservice education practices of twelve selected states.

Undergirding the conceptualization of inservice education, as the term is used in this report, is the definition proposed by Ben Harris in a position paper entitled "Inservice Education: A Definition, Delineation and Rationale" presented in August 1976 as part of the initial effort for statewide planning for inservice education by the Texas Education Agency. Inservice education is defined as a "planned program of learning opportunities afforded staff members of school districts and related agencies for purposes of improving performance in already held or assigned positions." This definition is supported by Lawrence, who refers to inservice education as "the continuing education of employed teachers," and by Joyce who calls inservice education an avenue to "the improvement of the educator's competence to carry out his assigned role."

The diverse nomenclature in the literature and position papers makes it essential early in this document to clarify some terms other than inservice education. Here, inservice training and inservice education are used interchangeably, but neither is synonomous with staff development. Inservice education is assumed to be one aspect of staff development. It is considered as the primary, but not the sole, vehicle for staff development. Its definition stresses four essential characteristics:

- **Learning** opportunities are afforded.
- **Purposes** are defined and relate to improving performance

- Activities address **assigned** jobs or positions which are designated.

- **Planned programs** provide assurance of accountability for predetermined outcomes.

The overriding concern for inservice education of staff members in schools is the improvement of learning opportunities for students. To be sure, it is not always possible to demonstrate a direct relationship between staff performance and student learning. However, there is much research that indicates that such relationships may exist. The fact that inservice education can clearly change staff performance makes it a crucial school function.

Accordingly, all planning for inservice education must be undertaken in terms of the relationships presumed among the following:

Staff Needs Assessment ► Training ► Performance of Staff ►

Instructional Program ► Student Learning

Hence, the emphasis of performance change must be further focused to deal with performances that relate to instruction and learning.

In order to arrange the research of the several studies reviewed into a coherent form, the findings are organized into six categories:

(1) **Personnel**. Who attends inservice education? Who conducts it? What are the roles of educators involved? For whom is inservice education typically targeted?

(2) **Situational Design**. Where, when, why, and how often does inservice education occur? What methods or delivery systems are typical of school district programs?

(3) **Planning**. Who plans inservice education? What does planning consist of? What constitutes training for planners? Who assists planners? Is planning long-range, continuous, based on identified needs, centralized? What characterizes "good" planning?

(4) **Evaluation**. Who evaluates inservice education? What evaluation procedures are typical? How are evaluation data used?

(5) **Content**. What are the topics of inservice education? Who determines content?

(6) **Funding**. How and to what extent is inservice education in Texas financed?

principles underlying effective inservice education

PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING EFFECTIVE INSERVICE EDUCATION

In view of the proliferation of publications produced on inservice education during the past few years and the wide diversity which characterizes opinions concerning inservice education, the fact that Texas educators seem to be in agreement with the principles underlying effective inservice education practices is both remarkable and timely. This consensus is reported by Dan P. McLendon in his unpublished doctoral dissertation, *An Analysis of the Extent of Agreement and Consensus Existing Among Selected Educator Groups in Texas Regarding Principles Underlying Effective Inservice Education.* Drawn from the literature, incorporated into a Delphi questionnaire, and distributed across the State, the thirty principles were divided into four clusters: planning, situational design, content, and support.

Summarized, the principles are as follows:

Planning: Teachers are more likely to benefit from inservice education when

- activities are linked to a districtwide effort
- activity objectives are specified
- activities are chosen by participants
- teachers are involved on the planning and conducting team
- planning represents shared interests of local school districts, colleges and universities, education service centers, and state education agencies
- responsibility for coordination is delegated to staff personnel with both time and expertise
- teacher perception of needs is utilized as well as other criteria of individual and program needs.

Situational Design: Inservice education programs are more likely to accomplish their objectives when

- activities are differentiated for all participants
- participants are actively rather than passively involved
- program content concerns immediate interests rather than storage of information for later use

- participants are encouraged to interact with each other
- activities are conducted in the school setting near the classroom environment.

Content: Inservice education is likely to be more meaningful when

- training reflects individuals' personal performance goals
- training reflects a teacher's multiple roles
- activities concentrate on improving competencies
- training emphasizes improving participants' effectiveness in the *present* position
- training emphasizes renewal or retraining rather than *initial* training
- evaluation is used to develop programs rather than just to "gather" data
- effectiveness of an inservice education activity is measured by teacher behavior rather than pupil behavior.

Support: Inservice education programs would be likely to benefit from

- reallocation of existing resources
- support on the basis of a direct pupil or per teacher allocation rather than exclusively through salaries for inservice education days and special programs
- inservice education funding addressed independently of other programmatic concerns
- inclusion of inservice education activities as part of the regular workday
- increased use of released time as an incentive for participation.

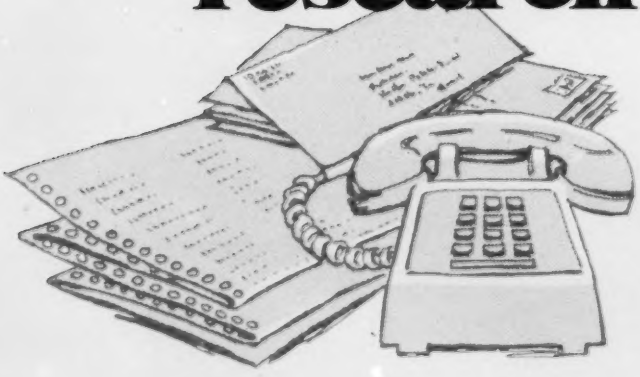
reporting format

REPORTING FORMAT

Because there was overwhelming agreement among educators in regard to these principles, research findings from two other Texas studies reviewed are presented according to similar categories: planning, situational design, content, and support.

The school systems within which staff development practices were investigated were selected randomly from six size strata already established within the Texas Education Agency data system. The selected districts represented school systems of large, medium, and small sizes, of widely diverse geographic areas, and of sparsely and densely populated areas. Data reported from these districts were drawn from *A Descriptive Analysis of Inservice Education Programs of Selected Texas School Systems Utilizing Operational Criteria*, by Jimmie L. Creekmur. Data regarding the staff development practices and programs of the twenty regional education service centers were provided by Don P. Killough from the study, *Inservice Education Practices of Regional Education Service Centers in Texas*. These centers were established in 1965 by the State Legislature as its primary vehicle for providing services, particularly inservice training, for the public school staffs of the state. Each of the three studies cited above reviewed inservice training programs for the 1975-76 school year.

limitations of the research



LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The question of whether or not the conditions of research are such that maximum validity and reliability can be claimed for the data generated is always an important one in reporting findings. There are a variety of limitations which make almost any research report suspect in the minds of some. On the whole, however, the limitations of the several studies reported in this document confine themselves to problems of sampling, varied interpretations of questionnaire statements, and turn-around time available for processing of responses.

Information presented here has been drawn from three unpublished doctoral dissertations: *A Descriptive Analysis of Inservice Programs of Selected Texas School Systems Utilizing Operational Criteria* by Jimmie L. Creekmur; *A Descriptive Analysis of the Roles of Education Service Centers in Providing Inservice Training Programs for the Public School Staffs of Texas During the 1975-76 School Year* by Don P. Killough; and *A Delphi Study of Agreement and Consensus Among Selected Educator Groups in Texas Regarding Principles Underlying Effective Inservice Education* by Dan P. McLendon.

SAMPLING

Creekmur's study sampled 165 districts from six size strata (including the six large urban districts) representing a cross section of geographic areas. Killough sampled each of twenty education service centers with the questionnaire respondent being generally the service center director or his designate. McLendon sampled the state by dividing it into six geographical areas, each containing at least one district of 50,000 or more ADA, two or more service centers, and as nearly as possible equal numbers of districts of ten to fifty thousand, one to ten thousand, and less than a thousand. Random computerized selections were then made to result in a total of 289 teachers, 98 principals, and 94 supervisors in 68 districts. Including state education agency and education service center consultants, McLendon's study involved 619 respondents.

THE QUESTIONNAIRE

In spite of the fact that the questionnaires were refined through several field trials, the final product may yet have omitted many questions which would have generated information about inservice education practices in Texas. This is not to cast doubt on the research findings. It is simply to review the fact that it is the very nature of research to be limited by design, by sample, by definition, by interpretation, by time, and by respondents themselves. Nor can these studies reflect all the inservice education activities which are taking place in the field.

SPECIFIC LIMITATIONS

Specific limitations regarding the three studies cited here include:

1. The narrowing of inservice education to an intra-institutional concern. Information was sought in regard to programs and planning which pertained only to inservice education designed for staffs of individual school districts. This focus would have led to the omission of reports of inservice education activities which bridged agencies and institutions.

2. The limited range of content utilized as criteria to judge effective inservice education programs. The studies used no specific criterion for effectiveness of inservice education but, rather, a set of basic principles of program planning implementation and evaluation presumed to have application to inservice education.

3. Questionnaire response which may have, through attrition, biased the studies. A Delphi questionnaire, for example, was mailed on first round to 409 teachers, principals, administrators, supervisors, and other personnel. Of that number, 299 individuals completed all three rounds of the questionnaire. It is possible that those individuals not responding on rounds two or three held views opposing those of the respondents. This would influence the results, but is a natural consequence of a legitimate research design.

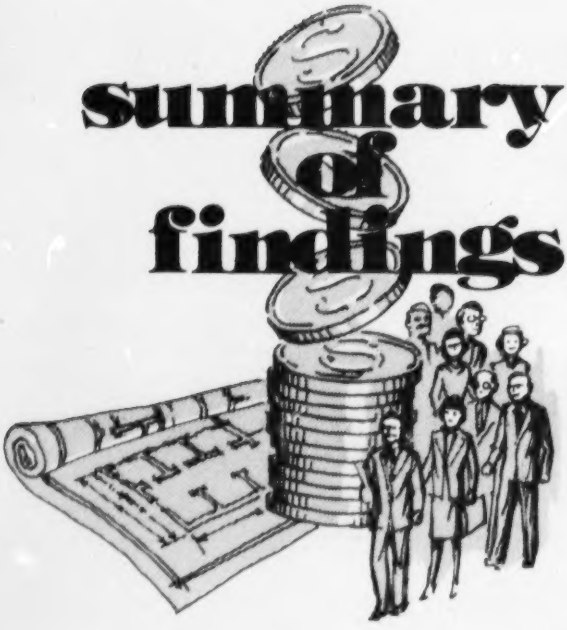
4. The use of the Delphi technique. (McLendon) It is the nature of the Delphi approach to assume that respondents are experts in their field. Questionnaire recipients for these studies are presumed to have been appropriately chosen.

5. Recipient of the questionnaire and the telephone interview follow-up. The random sample survey instruments for one study (Creekmur) were all mailed to the superintendent of the school districts and follow-up telephone interviews were conducted with either the superintendent or his designate. Therefore, the perceptions of the single respondent/interviewee may or may not coincide with those of other personnel of the district.

CONCLUSIONS

Much of the data reported in these several studies represents estimates or perceptions of the respondent. Every effort was made to ensure the appropriateness of the position of the respondent. Although these limitations, and perhaps others not mentioned here, will inherently affect the findings of the studies, they do not impose restrictions which prevent use of the data gathered.

summary of findings



SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

PERSONNEL

All Texas educators are expected to be recipients of inservice education as a result of the 1970 legislative enactment of House Bill 240, which added ten days to the contractual year of nine-month employees for inservice education and other specified activities. There is, however, some disparity in the amount of participation of professional staff members in inservice program activities.

The average manhours per participant reported spent in inservice education activities in Texas school districts are approximately forty-two hours excluding preparation, record keeping, and so-called "work days." This represents between five and seven days, depending on the number of hours used in calculating a day for training purposes. Since seven days were required under State Board of Education policy in 1975-76, it appears that bare minimum requirements were being recognized. In view of the fact that allotted time was typically used for inservice education in 1975-76, the 1976-77 reduction from seven to five days raises questions about the adequacy of the time left for inservice education.

Personnel who devote full-time to inservice education are few in number in Texas in both school districts and education service centers. In practice, central office administrators or supervisors typically devote only a small portion of their time to inservice education even when they have major responsibility for such programs. Only two of the twenty education service centers reported a full-time inservice education administrator-director while the majority of inservice education administrative personnel reported spending less than twenty-five percent of their time on inservice education. Of non-administrative professional personnel, however, about thirty percent were reported spending from three-fourths to ninety percent of their time on inservice education while less than seventy percent devote at least a fourth of their time to inservice education. It appears, further, that inservice education responsibilities are an add-on to personnel otherwise employed in various administrative or supervisory positions.

The personnel who reported spending twenty-five to ninety percent of their time in inservice education activities identified the following tasks (in the order of frequency) which might serve to characterize their responsibilities:

(1) evaluating inservice education programs

(2) conducting workshops

(3) developing program materials and activities

(4) conducting needs assessments

(5) consulting individually with participants

(6) performing classroom observations, and

(7) evaluating participant performance.

It is impossible from these studies to determine exactly who conducts inservice education. The majority of all size districts report that inservice education is conducted by "combinations of administrators, teachers, and supervisors." The activity leader seems to vary with the inservice education topic. When not conducted by in-district personnel however, inservice education is most often led by:

(1) Education service centers

(2) Colleges and universities

(3) Commercial companies or other institutions

(4) Nearby school districts

(5) Other components of a formal cooperative, and

(6) Texas Education Agency

A further review of the data, indicating that almost one-third of the reported inservice education is conducted by regional education service

center personnel, reveals that the use of education service center personnel for inservice education delivery is inversely related to the size of the district (with districts of 999 ADA or less receiving the majority of their inservice training from education service center staff and districts 50,000 or more receiving less than fifteen percent). On the average, ninety-four percent of the districts had participants in at least one education service center inservice education session in 1975-76. Fifteen service centers reported that 100 percent of the districts in their area were represented at center inservice sessions. Sixty percent of the total regional professional staffs attended at least one inservice education program provided by the centers. It appears that education service centers are serving approximately half of the state's professional staff members. The client groups for whom education service center training programs are typically designed are categorized as follows in the order of frequency of participation:

(1) elementary teachers

(2) middle school teachers

(3) senior high school teachers

(4) professional support personnel

(5) administrators

(6) paraprofessionals

(7) community participants

(8) students

(9) group combinations

Assuming that the combinations of client groups included teachers, it is probable that seventy to seventy-five percent of the inservice education sessions presented by the service centers were designed for teachers. Educators targeted for a minimum of inservice education are high school teachers and support personnel.

SITUATIONAL DESIGN

Location. A little more than ninety percent of inservice education activities reported took place in local district facilities, primarily in elementary or secondary schools. Smaller districts (999 ADA or under) tend to have a substantial portion of their inservice education at education service centers and nearby school districts. The use of the school setting is supported by both Lawrence and McLendon as having the highest probability for success. Says Lawrence, "Inservice programs in schools and on college campuses are equally capable of affecting teacher behavior, but the school settings tend to be capable of influencing more complex behavior changes in teachers." A negative restatement of Lawrence's premise, "meaningful inservice can best be accomplished by conducting them away from the classroom environment" is one of McLendon's thirty principles.

Killough reports, however, that inservice education programs scheduled by education service centers are most often set in center facilities. It may be that the use of their own facilities by these agencies in preference to local schools is essential to their operations which require serving many districts and operating inservice programs during school hours.

Scheduling. These studies further indicate that the majority of both education service center and in-district inservice education takes place on school days, within the school year, and during school hours. Responses of "sometimes," however, were noted for fourteen service centers to the question of holding inservice education in the late afternoon and evenings. Thirteen of the twenty education service centers indicated that inservice sessions sometimes are scheduled during the summer months. All but one indicated that inservice education on weekends is rarely scheduled. The prevalence of school hour, school year, program scheduling for inservice education indicates that districts are releasing staff members from regular responsibilities at the cost of hiring substitutes or re-allocating paraprofessional personnel.

Format. While examining the setting for inservice education it is interesting to note the similarity between Lawrence's reports of general format for inservice education and another principle of McLendon's. According to Lawrence, the workshop is by far the most common

format for inservice education reported in the ninety-seven studies reviewed, while only one-third of his studies included college courses, institutes, or other formats. Creekmur reports that almost forty percent of the school districts surveyed reported inservice education presentation format to be group (workshop type) meetings, about fifteen percent reported attendance at mass meetings only, and ten percent indicated attendance at individual pursuits, while a large group reported that their participant hours were spent in combined mass meetings and small group activities.

Variety. It appears that there is little variety in the inservice education format in most Texas school districts, and there is small participation in individual activities. One of McLendon's principles supports the need for variety.

> "The objectives of an inservice education program are more likely to be accomplished when the training activities are differentiated for participants than when common activities are planned for all participants."

Lawrence and Harris both concur with the position taken by nearly all respondents in McLendon's study on the need for a wide variety of activities.

Purposes. An important element in the situational design for inservice education is the purpose for which it is developed. Overwhelming evidence is presented in the various studies reviewed that the major purpose of inservice education is that of changing teacher behavior (skills development) rather than improving the cognitive store of information of teachers, although the latter – due to its less complex nature – has a higher success rate according to Lawrence.

An additional principle,

> "inservice activities should be primarily for the purpose of improving teaching competencies rather than for assuring teachers of tenure or continuing contracts"

had the highest agreement level of any of the principles reported by McLendon as underlying effective inservice education. This apparent agreement among researchers and practitioners alike that inservice

education should be for the purpose of improving teaching competencies suggests that program plans should place more emphasis on designing inservice education programs for directly changing actual performance patterns on the job.

Involvement. A major element to be considered in conjunction with the situational design of inservice education is teacher involvement. Involvement is defined as personal and committed participation. Involvement cuts across all components of effective inservice education and not just situational design. Involvement is the key which enhances the effectiveness of inservice education according to all the researchers consulted for this study. Of involvement, Harris says graphically,

> "the shores of inservice education programs down through the years are strewn with the wrecks of ships that sailed forth with only the officers on them, while the crew remained behind. One of the few certainties in the field of human endeavor is the relationship between involvement in an enterprise and commitment to its goals. From initial planning to final evaluation, the staff members must be intimately involved in the activities of a program in a meaningful way."

Lawrence tells us that "the inservice programs that have the best chance of being effective are those *involving* teachers in planning and managing their own professional development activities." Several principles in McLendon's study address the question of involvement fairly conclusively. One such principle states that, "In planning and conducting inservice, teachers should be involved as part of the planning/conducting team rather than having the activities planned and conducted exclusively by others." Another principle notes that, "Inservice program objectives and activities should be chosen by the participants themselves in contrast to being pre-determined for them." This tends to support the position that, while inservice education is an institutional affair, individuals and groups of staff members at all levels in the organization need very much to be involved in planning, implementing, and evaluating. Involvement of Texas teachers in inservice education is indicated clearly by Creekmur who points out that, "despite outcries to the contrary from the organized profession, respondents say that almost all teachers are consulted as to their perceived needs and desires for both topics and evaluative procedures of inservice education." These principles have operational meaning to education service centers

where inservice education was reported as relying on education service center staff for almost all design, programming, conducting, and evaluating, thus using teacher involvement in a limited way.

Planning. Superseding involvement in importance to the effectiveness of inservice education is planning. Planning is defined (Creekmur) as *systematicness*, "planned orderliness of the inservice education programming." It is composed of four aspects: (1) the existence of locally determined written goals for inservice education, (2) organization of a process for determining inservice education topics, (3) evaluative procedures and the orderliness of their use, and (4) whether or not the inservice education plan was drafted prior to the district budget, and the presence of a budget in the inservice education plan. Planning, along with its level of sophistication, is considered by many researchers to be the most important variable in determining the effectiveness of inservice education.

Both Killough and McLendon address the problem of planning comprehensively. McLendon posits nine principles regarding planning which educators of all kinds in Texas fully endorsed. They deal with responsibility for planning, objectives, continuity, collaboration with other agencies, needs assessment, and evaluation. One principle which speaks to the expertise needed in inservice education planning is as follows:

> "The responsibility for coordinating and directing the inservice education program of a district should be delegated to staff personnel with the time and expertise rather than asking a teacher or staff committee to undertake the assignment."

This position is supported also by Creekmur who found that

> "Those districts in which the person having primary responsibility for inservice education reported more training for that specific task also reported greater systematicness of the inservice education programming."

The importance of comprehensive planning to effective inservice education can hardly be overstressed. That comprehensive planning is probably at a premium among Texas school districts at this time is evidenced by the limited findings by Creekmur of indicators of

systematicness. Planning begins with locally determined written goals. It must be assumed that locally determined goals would spring from *needs assessment.* Sixty percent of the school districts surveyed indicated that inservice education topics were determined by needs assessment. The other forty percent reported that topics were selected by recommendations from teacher advisory committees, requests from teacher organizations, school board or administrative recommendation, and almost ten percent reported use of no needs assessment at all.

All Texas schools operate inservice education by written plan according to State Board of Education policy. There is, however, considerable variation in the character of these plans.

The source for most of the planning for inservice education is revealed in the data submitted by Creekmur who reports that within district inservice education planning most often includes principals; secondly, superintendents; next, teachers; followed by other administrative personnel; district supervisory personnel; school level supervisors; and finally, other school level supervisors. Superintendents tend to become less involved in inservice education planning as the districts become larger. Central staff become more highly involved in larger districts, but principals' involvement is fairly stable (and high) regardless of district size. The fact that almost ninety percent of in-district planning of inservice education is reported to be undertaken by school principals is a rather clear indicator that a target group for training in planning can be identified. Outside district planning is most often provided local schools by education service centers, cooperation with other districts, college/university consultants, TEA, and commercial publishers or other companies. Planning within education service centers has already been addressed in this report along with involvement, but it is interesting to note here that decision-making about inservice education in education service centers is traceable to:

(1) center staff

(2) committees of center staff and school administrators

(3) committees of center and school staffs including teachers

(4) Texas Education Agency

(5) LEA administrative staff

(6) LEA staff plus teachers, and

(7) the federal level.

Although committees of center staff and school administrators, sometimes involving teachers, are reported to share in decision-making about inservice education, staff members themselves are largely responsible. Other agencies, including TEA, represent a small position in decision-making.

Tracing the source of identified needs of inservice education provided by education service centers indicates that the most frequent source of needs was reported to have extended from regional assessment (about thirty percent), the second most frequent source was the State-mandate, (about twenty percent); while the local district, federal level, individual school level, and the individual staff member level were less frequently reported as sources of identified needs. These data concerning the needs assessment phase of planning suggest that education service centers are responding typically to needs defined on a rather broad basis geographically rather than focusing on individual or specialized needs.

EVALUATION

Another aspect of planning is evaluation. Creekmur names the principal as the most frequently selected evaluator in both large and small districts, although districts of fifty thousand ADA reported 100 percent teacher involvement in evaluation.

Evaluation appears to be subjective and rather superficial in most districts. Creekmur reports that about forty percent of the evaluation methods reported in school districts consist of verbal feedback from participants, thirty-eight percent is accomplished through use of reactionnaires at the end of each session, and about fifteen percent stems from annual surveys. Only a minimal number of districts surveyed indicated that tests of outcomes or discrepancy analyses were applied as evaluation techniques. Some districts reported that no

evaluation procedures were used. Killough's study reveals a similar situation for education service centers in relation to evaluation. He shows that the most commonly used evaluation procedures were the perceptions and opinions of program participants, implementers, and administrators. Education service centers, however, did report some use of standardized instruments and external agents or consultants for evaluation. This heavy reliance on subjective sources for evaluation and the availability of only the most easily obtained data suggest that the state of evaluation of inservice education as it is practiced in Texas in most schools and education service centers is rather primitive.

The presence of a system of evaluation was the major determinant for selection of studies for Lawrence's research. It is significant to note the small number of studies (ninety-seven) in the field which met his requirement for inclusion in his review. Another indicator of the state of evaluation of inservice education in the nation is Carthel's summary comment in "An Analysis of Documents Reporting on Selected Inservice Programs" which reviewed significant inservice education practices in twelve states. He says,

> "The need for evaluation is recognized in all the programs studied. The means is usually left up to the local districts, but some states require that an evaluation system be devised and carried out (Alabama, Connecticut, Florida, Louisiana, New Hampshire, and Pennsylvania)."

There are implications for improved evaluation procedures in two of McLendon's principles.

> "Evaluation should be made an integral part of the development of inservice programs primarily as a means for improving classroom instruction rather than for the purpose of gathering evaluation data," and

> "The basis for judging the effectiveness of an inservice activity should be the extent to which there has been change in teaching behavior, that is, classroom performance skills, rather than the extent to which there has been change in pupil behavior or learning."

The overwhelming agreement among Texas educators with these principles indicates the clarity of the position which they seem to prefer on this issue. There are, of course, multiple issues raised by these two principles regarding evaluation, but two are outstanding: effective

use of evaluation data is its reason for being, and teacher behavioral change, rather than pupil behavioral change, is the product of effective inservice education.

Implied by these data is the real need for inservice education to concern itself with its own evaluation and with evaluation techniques which are used to direct and improve the instructional process.

CONTENT

Central to evaluation is, of course, the content of programs to be evaluated. In inservice education the content has been rather well researched by all comers. A review of the purposes of inservice education is useful before approaching the question of content. Harris proposes for inservice education four purposes: (1) competency improvement, (2) up-grading, (3) specialization, and (4) innovation. These categories are supported by Killough who reports that the most frequently identified purpose for inservice education by education service center participants is *innovation* (almost forty percent), followed next by basic generic *competency development* (about twenty-five percent), followed closely by *specialized* competency development (twenty-five percent), and trailed by *remediation* of inappropriate performance patterns (about ten percent). Innovation, then, apparently leads by a wide margin as the raison d'etre for inservice education offered by education service centers. Creekmur indicates that there is almost even distribution of inservice education time between programs for *specific* teaching assignments (such as elementary reading) and programs to improve *general* teaching skills (such as classroom management).

Administrators' perceptions of reasons why teachers participate in inservice education programs are closely related to the purposes above. It goes without saying that teachers attend because it is required. More importantly, however, is that they attend first to gain skills and knowledge which will help to fulfill their personal desire to be helpful to others. Secondly, they attend for the purpose of keeping abreast of trends in order to plan professionally for the future, and thirdly to keep skills updated.

Killough lists, in the order of frequency, those topics which typically are the subject of service center inservice education programs. Heading the list is *individualization of instruction*. Half the education service centers in the state acknowledge individualization of instruction as their major program thrust. Other thrusts which were reported are (1) crime and drug education (2) bilingual education (3) career education (4) special education, and (5) reading. Although twenty-seven major program thrusts for inservice education were reported by the twenty education service centers, these five are clearly central. Significantly, four of these five major program directions confirm the concerns of Texas educators, polled by the Texas Education Agency Office of Planning and Evaluation in 1974. With the exception of bilingual education, concerns voiced for inservice education programming in 1974 were again proclaimed in 1976.

Planning is made up of more elements than those which compose systematicness (goals, needs assessment, budget, and evaluation), but Creekmur's close analysis revealed three significant characteristics of school districts which were high in systematicness. First is *centralization*, the tendency for the planning and programming of inservice education to be districtwide as opposed to being dispersed to schools or departments. Second is *training*, the tendency of those responsible for inservice education to have had some courses and/or experience which trained them for the task. Third is *planned continuity*, the presence of evidence that planning occurs over time. The conclusion resultant from analysis of these three characteristics is that *centralization* will tend to impact *training* which will produce *systematicness*. It is clear that the influential variable affecting systematicness is *training*. Training is meant here as specifically related to inservice education functions, such as, methods designed to increase involvement, planning procedures, techniques of group dynamics, and supervised experience in systematizing collaborative efforts. Another important variable associated with *systematicness* is *involvement*. Creekmur reports that districts with high systematicness score equally high in *involvement*. Conversely, districts which are low in systematicness tend to be low in involvement.

These principles from McLendon confirm the need for systematicness in inservice education planning:

> "Teachers are more likely to benefit from inservice education when the activities are linked to a districtwide effort than when the activities are

not a part of an overall inservice plan," and "Inservice activities should be planned and scheduled so that there is a sense of continuity between the inservice and other activities rather than setting the training apart from the regular schedule."

Studies cited here imply that, although planning is esteemed in the literature, in practice it is given fairly low priority. Less than one percent of all districts polled by Creekmur reported planning that is initiated over twelve months in advance. Twenty percent of the districts reported beginning planning as much as six months prior to sessions. Most districts apparently mount inservice education sessions on short-term planning.

FUNDING FOR INSERVICE EDUCATION

The two aspects of funding which are the concern of this paper are the sources of funding for inservice education programs in Texas and the amount of money utilized for inservice education operations.

Creekmur reports that inservice education funds can normally come from four sources (1) the local district, (2) state government, (3) federal government, and (4) private contribution. His study reports about seventy percent local district support, less than fifteen percent from state government, and less than ten percent from federal government sources. Virtually none is from private contributions. One of the notable outcomes of the research into sources of funds utilized for inservice education is the differences in percentages reported as from federal government. As the size of the school district increases, the reported percentage of financial support for inservice education from this source increased. Also, as district size increased, the portion of funds from local sources for inservice education decreased.

When asked to state the total expenditure for inservice education not including salaries, but including substitute expenses to replace teachers so they can participate, districts reported a wide range of dollars per scholastic. By size strata the median ranged from one to seven dollars with a median for all districts of just less than four dollars in 1975-76 and almost five budgeted in 1976-77. One large urban district reported an expenditure of fifteen dollars per pupil for inservice education.

Killough's research on education service center funding practices differed from Creekmur's only in that it included salaries for personnel in the total funding figure. Total funding for education service centers in Texas in the year 1975-76 amounted to fifty-one million dollars of which fourteen million was devoted to inservice education. This represents almost one-third of center operating budgets. There are, however, wide differences among education service centers in the amount of their individual budgets assigned to inservice education. The reported range varies from ten percent to sixty percent.

Education service center funding sources parallel those of districts:

(1) state grants (about forty percent)

(2) federal grants (about thirty percent)

(3) base funding (about twenty percent)

(4) local districts (about five percent)

(5) other (less than one percent)

Education service center budgets are primarily expended for salaries of professional staff. Other related costs are traced to materials and equipment, outside consultants, non-professional staff, physical facilities, research and evaluation, public relations and dissemination, and general support (such as travel etc.).

An issue raised by its obvious low priority for funding is the category of outside consultants (less than ten percent). Killough's research informs us that education service centers tend to rely on their own staffs for almost all aspects of the inservice education effort.

INCENTIVES

Funding for inservice education involves several elements additional to budgeting for staff and resources. One of these is the need for funds to provide released time for teachers to attend inservice education functions. It has been established already that education service centers

provide about thirty percent of the inservice education training available to local districts. It has also been reported that inservice education scheduling is *typically* held during the school year, in daytime and on school time. The resultant cost to school districts is a heavy burden, but one for which they apparently feel a strong need as evidenced by the numbers of attendees at such scheduled functions. At the present time incentives offered for attendance at inservice education functions consist largely of released time, and the desire to improve skills. Bruce Joyce's work (Inservice Teacher Education Concepts Project) claims that inservice education should be at least neutral, that is, not penalizing the teacher through inconveniences of time, location, or facility. McLendon's research indicates that for Texas educators incentives may *not* be a major concern. Incentives, their variety and cost, could well be increasingly important, however, if programs become more complex and demanding.

reflections on the findings

REFLECTIONS ON THE FINDINGS

Inservice education is not a series of activities paraded before an unresponsive audience. It is, instead, a set of activities carried on within, and as part of, an interacting system. To think of inservice education as unilateral, or as imposed from a single "leader" setting the way for the system to follow, is dynamically incorrect. Inservice education is, rather, based on information coming from the remainder of the system. If inservice education has any influence, it alters the system positively, which then produces new information on which further planning for inservice education is based. Inservice education, as it is practiced in Texas, in both school districts and regional service centers, has some important behavior characteristics which we must understand before we can draw implications which may lead to system behavior changes. Notably absent from the research on these practices is in-depth sounding on the "quality" of inservice programs; rather, the research tended to provide quantitative data. The particular studies upon which this document is based indicate several conditions found to exist in inservice education which are possible implications for change.

TIME INVESTMENT OF PARTICIPANTS

Teachers in 1975-76 are reported to have spent about forty-two hours, or the equivalent of seven days, excluding preparation, record-keeping, and work days, in inservice education. The range of hours experienced by the average teacher in the various ADA size strata is from a low of forty hours to a high of forty-five hours. Since State Board of Education regulations require no less than five days, a thirty-hour minimum was possible. The fact that the amount of time spent in inservice education is greater than the amount presently authorized by the legislature means that

> Texas school personnel need more time for inservice education, given the demands from various sources (state, local, individual) which cannot be substantially reduced.

TRAINING OF INSERVICE EDUCATION PERSONNEL

One research finding which seems to have far-reaching implications for change in inservice education concerns the level of training reported by personnel in both school districts and education service centers for the inservice education task. The fact that those districts which reported more training for inservice education personnel also exhibited greater systematicness of the inservice education programming implies, among other things, that

> personnel assigned responsibility for the inservice education development tasks should be provided both time and training in order to bring about improvement in quality of services.

PER PUPIL EXPENDITURES FOR INSERVICE EDUCATION

Reported costs for inservice education varied so widely among respondents that generalization is difficult. What can be relied upon from the research is the fact that the average level of financial support outside the six largest urban districts is quite low, less than one-fourth of that spent by the larger districts. Districts of 1,500 to 5,000 ADA spend less than fifteen percent of the amount spent by urban districts. This disparity indicates

> that efforts should be made at the state level to provide a foundation funding base for inservice education expenditures. Several methods might be applied to this effort, for example, a per teacher allocation, a matching local funds contract, a reallocation of programmatic funds, special project allocations, or additional staff units.

FUNDING SOURCES FOR INSERVICE EDUCATION

Sources of funding for inservice educatior. are three: local, state, and federal. The larger share of the cost of inservice education seems at this time to be borne by local districts, although many depend on regional education service centers for the bulk of their training. A substantial part of the cost of inservice education to local districts may result from the extensive practice of releasing teachers to attend inservice education workshops by providing a substitute teacher. This heavy reliance on

local sources for inservice education funds indicates that

> further study of the sources for funding for inservice education should be undertaken, and that regional education service centers may need additional funding in order to permit them to be of greater assistance to school districts, both large and small.

PLANNING FOR INSERVICE EDUCATION

Planning is reported in the research to be short-term rather than long-range, lacking in systematicness, programmatic, targeted for large groups, and minimally funded. It appears that inservice education is traditionally approached in Texas as ad hoc, year-by-year and day-by-day. This approach may be encouraged by present state policy which prescribes a minimum number of days and scheduling of these days on a school calendar submitted annually to the Texas Education Agency. The possibility that inservice education will serve the teachers well as programs for growth, or districts well in the development of programs, without better planning is unlikely. Therefore, it seems desirable that the immediate need for long-range systematic planning should be supported by encouraging more flexibility in scheduling inservice education activities, greater variety of types of inservice education activities, and more flexibility in choosing sources of assistance. An implication of the research which asserts itself is that inservice education planning by local districts should become longer term and

> inservice education planning, along with training in planning, should be given high priority and support by the institutions being served; and special grants for planning should be made available.

EVALUATION OF INSERVICE EDUCATION

Evaluation of inservice education was reported by researchers to be accomplished most often through verbal feedback from participants and by reactionnaires at the end of individual sessions. The use of such superficial, easily obtained data implies

> that evaluation of inservice education needs improvement and that training should be afforded to schools for development of effective evaluation of inservice education.

EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS AND INSERVICE EDUCATION

Inservice education is significantly influenced in Texas by the twenty regional education service centers which have inservice education as partial raison d'etre. This is evidenced by the fact that approximately ninety-four percent of the districts surveyed had participants in at least one ESC inservice program during 1975-76, and further by the fact that almost thirty percent of the budgets for the twenty centers is expended for inservice education. It is a reality that education service centers have assumed a large share of the responsibility for inservice training of Texas teachers. There are, however, a few service centers which indicate less commitment than most to inservice education as a priority function. This wide range of commitment (as evidenced by staff time, and money allocated for inservice education) may imply

> that the state should continue to support education service centers in their role of supporting local inservice education efforts; and
>
> that education service centers should reassess their priorities in terms of giving a higher priority to inservice education.

CONTENT OF INSERVICE EDUCATION

Another finding of the research on inservice education which certainly bears consideration is that of content. Research indicates that inservice education topics tend to follow programmatic efforts of state and federal education agencies, (for example, categorically funded areas such as career education, drug education, bilingual education, special education). While this may imply that local interests are indeed reflective of state and federal programmatic needs, it may also imply

> that perceptions of local needs by inservice education planners should be given more careful attention. Perhaps a greater variety of methods of needs assessment and determination should be employed.

INVOLVEMENT OF PARTICIPANTS IN INSERVICE EDUCATION

Another finding in the research on inservice education deals with involvement. Involvement can be defined as personal and committed

participation. Higher levels of involvement of teachers and a variety of other personnel in both planning and conducting of inservice education tend to produce more effective training. This finding seems to imply not only that high involvement of teachers in developing inservice education should be sought by both local education agencies and education service centers but also that

> local personnel should find ways of formalizing systematic involvement of teachers and others in all aspects of inservice education development through exploration of a variety of techniques.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Another important characteristic of inservice education as it is practiced in Texas is its reported use of some kind of instrument for assessment of needs. More than sixty percent of responding districts indicated use of an instrument for determining topics for inservice education and all twenty education service centers reported using a needs assessment instrument for the same purpose. Districts of over 50,000 ADA reported use of recommendations for topics from teacher advisory committees while smaller districts appeared to rely more on survey instruments. These facts seem to indicate that a majority of districts report that all personnel are consulted, in some way, as to their perceived needs and desires for inservice education. There is, however, a persistent claim on the part of both organized groups and individuals that their personal needs are not being met.

Although first glance may indicate conflict between these two positions, it is probable that both are correct, i.e. – an assessment instrument is used in most districts to determine needs of teachers and teachers generally feel that their needs are not being met.

The implication which asserts itself is not only that

> planners should find ways to relate inservice education to teacher and program needs, but also

> that use of a variety of ways to get at teacher needs and program needs should be encouraged.

INCENTIVES

Questionnaire respondents indicate that, beyond the requirement for teachers to attend inservice education, the incentives for teacher participation consist mainly of gaining skills to stay abreast with developments in the field of teaching.

> In view of the fact that inservice education takes place often during school hours, a study of the funding and incentive of released time should be undertaken.

CONCLUSIONS

Implications for change in the development of inservice education in the State of Texas form a cohesive pattern which can impact the system. In order to trace this interrelated influence, it is well to review some basic tenets of the art.

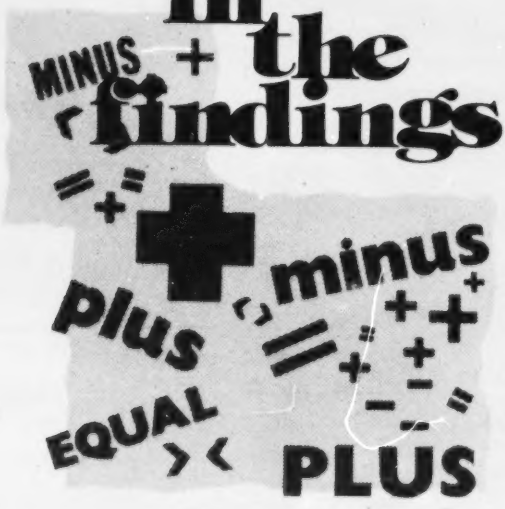
Inservice education is dependent for success on the mutually satisfying interaction of its constituents. Constituents of inservice education are generally considered to be teachers, administrators, teacher educators, professional organizations, education service centers, institutions of higher education, and state education agencies. Certainly not every inservice education product will represent (or should represent) input from all constituents; nor will each constituent seek representation in specific inservice education programs of others. However, each constituent feels a vested interest in inservice education which needs to be considered and weighed carefully in future planning.

To bridge the gap between what is and what should be in terms of inservice education in the State of Texas, much dialogue among constituents must take place. Such dialogue must be undertaken in the full knowledge of the dynamic character and multiple proprietorship of inservice education. Otherwise, prejudicial judgment can lead to the ineffective expenditure of large amounts of money in equally ineffective programs for inservice education.

The planning for corrective action for inservice education, or any other dynamic system, usually takes the form of identifying a problem and

proceeding to devise programs for change. Often these programs are addressed only to symptoms, but symptoms are hard to change if causes remain. We cannot treat causes unless we understand them. The first step then in any large scale effort to discern underlying causes and thereby improve inservice education is not to launch a frontal assault on the symptoms but to engage resources in activities which will release the internal power, initiative, driving force, enthusiasm, and human potential of the constituents of the system with the expressed intent of raising the quality of inservice education through creative collaboration. Such collaboration will require continued work, discipline, and coordination among all constituents.

discrepancies in the findings



DISCREPANCIES IN THE FINDINGS

Discrepancies among research, practice, and the positions taken have been minimal. In fact only one such discrepancy is worth the name. It relates to the presumed continuity between inservice education and preservice education. Principle number three in McLendon states that,

> "In the process for training teachers, preservice and inservice should be considered as an on-going process with activities planned accordingly rather than as separate almost mutually exclusive components."

Both Lawrence and Harris voice opposition to this. Lawrence takes the position that any teaching skills or attributes that can be *better* developed through inservice should be included in inservice, while preservice education should give attention to the others. This certainly implies a separation of purposes for inservice and preservice education. Harris contends that inservice programs which seek to maintain a continuum of experiences are not desirable for development of the individual as an autonomous practitioner. National and state teacher professional organizations, however, appear to take the view that a vehicle for legitimatizing the relationship between preservice and inservice education is already in motion in the form of the teacher center movement. A priority of the Texas State Board of Education addresses this need, also, when it calls for "coordination of preservice/inservice efforts, particularly those related to the operations of the local cooperative teacher education centers."

In the total context of inservice education, three responsible agents can be identified and taken into consideration:

- the responsibility of the employing district to provide inservice education to its own personnel,
- the shared responsibility of any collaborating agencies or organizations to provide an information loop from preservice to inservice, and

- the responsibility of the individual professional for his own continuing education.

Coordination among these responsible agents will be enhanced by direct and continuing dialogue.

50

NEXT STEPS

There is still much to be learned about the current state of inservice education in Texas elementary and secondary schools. This project is implementing still other studies and recognizes that already available data needs further analysis. Several points seem clear in the light of these three studies in combination with findings from the literature that has been reviewed:

(1) The need for inservice education programs of the highest quality is accepted extensively among educators across the State.

(2) There is unusual agreement among various educator groups on what constitutes sound principles of inservice education.

(3) Research on effectiveness is overwhelming in showing that change in on-the-job performance can be produced by high quality inservice education.

(4) Texas school districts are having to implement inservice education with very little money, time, and staff.

(5) Education service centers are providing inservice education to a large segment of the staffs of the elementary and secondary schools.

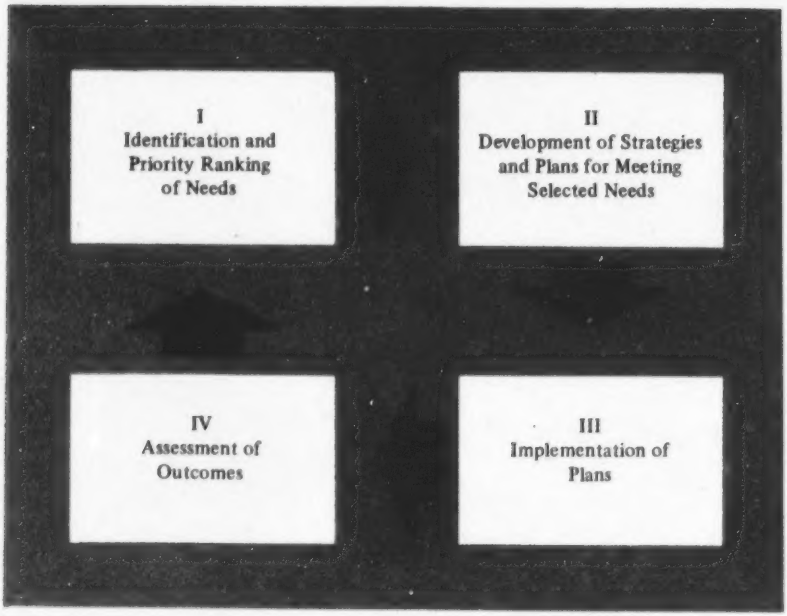
(6) The quantity and character of inservice education offered to Texas school staffs vary widely from district to district and region to region.

(7) Obvious *strengths* in current practice in Texas are to be found in some strong local funding efforts and substantial involvement of teachers in some districts along with administrative and supervisory personnel in planning and conducting inservice programs.

(8) Obvious *weaknesses* are to be found in the low quality of planning, use of a limited variety of activities, and the simplistic character of evaluation of inservice education.

The challenge immediately ahead is to devise a statewide plan for building on current strengths while overcoming weaknesses. The common denominators in this problem seem to be money, time, and trained personnel.

Educational Improvement Cycle



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